

**Testimony before the  
House Government Reform Subcommittee  
On National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations  
by  
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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Kucinich, good afternoon. I am a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and currently the Dean of the Leadership and Management School of the Foreign Service Institute. Prior to this assignment, I served as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Guatemala and, before that, to the Republic of Kenya. Thank you for inviting me to testify, the first time I have been asked to do so since the Al Qaeda bombing of the American Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998. I appreciate your attention to the issue of overseas security.

While the GAO Report addresses so-called “soft targets,” its recommendations would, if implemented, strengthen overseas security in general. An attack on family members or employees serving under Chief of Mission authority is a nightmare beyond belief, whether it occurs at a “hard” or “soft” target. When bad things happen in a foreign country far from home, the trauma is often magnified, and its impact goes far beyond effects on immediate victims and survivors.

Nairobi was a case in point. The bomb that exploded in our parking lot killed 213 people instantly and wounded 5,000 more. In the embassy, we suffered a 50% casualty rate. The remaining 50% had no 911 to call, no police or fire department to rely upon, no rescue squad or ambulances to contact. Kenya, like over half of the countries to which Department personnel are assigned, is a developing country. On a normal day, medical facilities are inadequate. On August 7, 1998, they were overwhelmed. Survivors in our building, including a high school student and a college intern, regrouped on the front steps and voluntarily returned to what was a death trap to tend to the injured, dig colleagues out of the rubble, and carry out the dead. For the first critical 24 hours, we were on our own. The heroism of the entire community was extraordinary. I think you would have been as proud as I was.

When help finally arrived, it came like fury -- hundreds of investigators, rescue workers and international press. Later, American and Foreign Service National colleagues also joined us to help put the pieces of our organization back together. Although American employees of the embassy were given the opportunity to curtail their assignments -- an option unavailable to our Kenyan colleagues -- few chose to leave. Instead, some of the wounded returned, often with shards of glass still imbedded in them. Two of the people who had died in the bombing were Moms. Their surviving spouses decided to stay, unwilling to subject their children to further stress by uprooting them from their friends and school. Trauma and sorrow permeated the community. Absent counseling and other services available at home, parents, students, teachers, colleagues and community members relied upon one another for support and healing. No one left Nairobi untouched.

The impact of the Nairobi and Dar es Salaam bombings circled the globe. Protecting and representing the United States overseas is not just a job for us, it is a family commitment. We are a small Service and we know one another, so when something happens, it affects all of us. For the foreign affairs community, August '98 was our 9/11.

I would like to outline what the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and other elements of the Department of State are doing to prepare people to live in a far more dangerous world. Ideally, we would create environments overseas in which employees and family members could thrive, notwithstanding the presence of constant threat. We are a long way from reaching that ideal, but we have been making progress.

## TRAINING

All American entry-level employees receive basic security training. These programs are incorporated in the various orientation programs for Civil and Foreign Service employees, Locally Engaged Staff (including Foreign Service Nationals), and employees from other agencies attending the mandatory Introduction to Working in an Embassy course. We have also embedded security and crisis management training in all of FSI's "tradeecraft" classes, including those provided to Foreign Service Nationals. Health care providers, for example, receive training in such areas as triage and emergency medical treatment, while others will focus on aspects appropriate to their lines of work.

The Security Overseas Seminar (SOS), which concentrates on life in an overseas environment, is mandatory for all federal employees and recommended for eligible family members. Unfortunately, it is not provided to the growing numbers of people not listed on an employee's official orders, such as elderly parents and partners. The two-day course addresses the full range of security issues, including general security awareness, sexual assault, counter intelligence, survival techniques, and managing in a crisis. A similar, age-appropriate program, YSOS, is offered to young family members, grades 2 through 12.

At post, people receive briefings tailored to the host country, as well as hands-on training from periodic roving teams out of Washington. The Overseas Building Operations, for example, send out people to teach fire prevention and protection, as well as methods of escape. The Medical Office offers "Simple Triage and Rapid Treatment" and "Community Emergency Response Training." In addition, Crisis Management Teams from the Leadership and Management School fan out across the world to help Emergency Action Committees exercise their emergency plans. This is a bi-annual requirement for every embassy; in the case of one-year postings, exercises are conducted every year. Crisis scenarios tailored to actual possibilities are presented, and the outcomes are debriefed. With our encouragement, Foreign Service Nationals are participating in growing numbers. Where we can, we also include overseas schools and appropriate host government officials.

Are we satisfied that we are doing enough? No. The GAO Report makes the point that the more rigorous DSAC training should become mandatory for everyone going to critical-threat posts. I agree. My colleagues from other offices engaged in crisis preparation have raised additional suggestions, such as more defensive and evasive driving techniques because road accidents remain the number one cause of injury and death overseas. We all agree we need to better prepare people to survive chemical and/or biological attacks, and we would like to see greater coverage of emergency procedures like the Community and Emergency Response Training. I intend to be an advocate for this increased training within the Department and we will review how we can best address these needs.

## LEADERSHIP

The GAO Report rightly points out that involvement from senior leadership is critical. The Leadership and Management School is responsible for both the Ambassadorial and Deputy Chief of Mission Seminars. Counter terrorism, security and crisis management issues take up more of that training than any other single topic. We begin the Ambassadorial Seminar, for example, with a lengthy discussion of President Bush's Letter of Instruction. It explicitly states their responsibilities: "I expect you to take direct and full responsibility for the security of your mission and all the personnel for whom you are responsible, whether inside or outside the chancery gate. Unless an interagency agreement provides otherwise, the Secretary of State and you as Chief of Mission must protect all United States Government personnel on official duty abroad, other than those under the protection of a U.S. area military commander or on the staff of an international organization, and their accompanying dependents." Few employees receive such clear position descriptions, and our Ambassadors take them very seriously.

The Seminar also stresses ways to communicate with people "outside the chancery gates," encouraging frequent town meetings, close relationships with ex-patriot citizen and business organizations, and attention to the embassy's warden system. In so doing, we emphasize the importance of maintaining a strict policy of "no double standard" when it comes to sharing information with Americans under Chief of Mission authority and U.S. citizens in the host country for other reasons. We make it clear that the Ambassador and DCM have a critical leadership role within the community, not just within the embassy. Attention to the institutions that support the community, such as schools or employee-sponsored recreation clubs, comes with that role.

In preparation for the 2005 series of Seminars, we partnered with Diplomatic Security to redesign the day and a half we devote to security, counter terrorism and crisis management. We piloted the new design in the April Ambassadorial Seminar and plan more changes for the next one. The purpose of the redesign is to underscore the responsibilities they have and the role they play in providing for the safety and welfare of Americans at post. We will likely continue to refine the design to incorporate more "best practices," like sending out security notices under the signature of the Chief

of Mission or Deputy Chief of Mission, rather than the Regional Security Officer, to underscore their importance.

## CHALLENGES

Embassy leadership is now more aware and better prepared for crises, including terrorist attacks, than we ever were in the past. No one wants to go to the number of funerals and memorial services my colleagues and I attended after the Nairobi bombing. All of us want to be able to say truthfully, “I did my very best,” when we look into the eyes of grieving survivors and family members. No one can make guarantees, but we can keep trying to make people safe. The GAO Report offers incremental changes. I would like to suggest more profound challenges.

1. Finding the right balance between living vigilantly and normally.

People do not stay on high alert for long periods of time. In my experience, they eventually either burn out or live in denial. Like many Chiefs of Mission, I have struggled to find a rhythm that provided a level of normalcy and yet retained a focus on the constant dangers around us. Employees routinely practice emergency procedures in the workplace, and many posts have mandatory radio programs and alerts for the schools and communities. As the GAO Report highlights, however, many community members are still unaware of what to do. Scare tactics are ultimately self-defeating, and administrative mandates such as checklists risk becoming rote exercises. The challenge is to ensure that people are “looking both ways before they cross the street,” to use a metaphor. Neither paralysis nor indifference is acceptable. I think we will learn how to do this, but it will take time.

2. Maintaining a consistency of funding and attention to security issues.

Maintaining the level of funding and effort we devote to security issues today is a shared responsibility of the Administration and the Congress, and one that still affects me very personally. In his Report of the Accountability Review Boards to Congress in 1998, Admiral Crowe noted in the Executive Summary that: “The Boards were especially disturbed by the collective failure of the U.S. Government over the past decade to provide adequate resources to reduce the vulnerability of U.S. diplomatic missions to terrorist attacks in most countries around the world. Responsibility for this

failure can be attributed to several Administrations and their agencies including the Department of State, the National Security Council, and the Office of Management and Budget, as well as the U.S. Congress.” In fiscal year 1998, a budget for security construction and security upgrades for foreign buildings was woefully inadequate. By contrast, in fiscal year 2006, our request will provide over \$1.1 billion for new embassy projects and other security upgrades to facilities worldwide. This total includes cost sharing with other agencies as part of our Capital Security Cost Sharing Program. Under this program, annual spending on capital security projects is expected to rise to \$1.4 billion a year over the next several years. I appreciate the support the Congress has provided for this initiative and hope that you will continue to support this program critical to the safety of our men and women serving overseas. One of the reasons I appreciate the GAO Report and this hearing is the focus it continues to put on the safety of civilians on the front lines.

### 3. Changing the ethos and image of the Department of State.

Secretary Rice’s transformational diplomacy calls us to be proactive in a dangerous world. Today, 64% of Department employees overseas and 87% of Foreign Service generalists with 15 years or more of service can count on experiencing evacuations, civil unrest, kidnapping, natural disasters, assassinations, terrorist attacks and other “crises” listed in our Foreign Affairs Handbook. The old stereotype of Department employees as “men in striped pants,” which I saw recently in a newspaper article, is now more inaccurate than ever. The Administration and the Congress have recognized our important role in promoting American interests and have provided significant resource increases that have helped us to conduct diplomacy in today’s world. I hope the Congress will continue to support us by providing the Administration’s request for this fiscal year and remain vigilant in years to come.

Mr. Chairman, I have had the fortune during my career and at the Leadership and Management School to interact with thousands of State Department employees. I know them to be fiercely patriotic, willing to put themselves and their families at risk in order to make a difference on behalf of the American people. They deserve to thrive. At the very least, they deserve our best efforts to keep them safe. I can assure you of the sincerity of our efforts, and I thank you for your own contribution. My hope is that

we can continue to count on you and your fellow committee members to be partners and advocates.

Thank you.